



PERSONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Marketing PFM Program & Services

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO MARKETING

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals. (Dictionary of Marketing Terms, 2nd Edition, Peter D. Bennet, Editor, 1995). In simpler terms, marketing is the process by which one reaches customers and persuades them to purchase, use and repurchase a product or service.

Marketing targets populations, informs them about products and services, and motivates them to use these products/services. Marketing is not only selling or advertising, but also ensuring that the right goods and services are produced and find their way to the consumer. The wide-range of marketing activities includes: market research, analyzing the competition, finding one's market niche, pricing and promotion.

Effective marketing requires delivering the goods and services that consumers want and need. When exploring PFM marketing efforts, an FFSC should ask itself the following questions:

- What PFM programs and services are we promoting?
- When and where should we deliver these services?
- Are we directing all of our efforts to satisfying our customers?
- Are the PFM programs and services cost-effective?

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- Can we deliver what we are marketing? Do we have the staff and resources to meet an increased request in services?

Marketing links the buyer (commands, service members and their families) and the seller (FFSC). Two effective ways to market are:

- **Public Relations (PR):** Public relations sells an idea or concept that raises awareness and support of programs/services. It helps the customer understand the organization. The “buyer” feels that the “seller” cares about him/her. It is considered a “soft sell”. Examples of public relations for FFSC programs/services include personal networking (establishing relationships with command leadership), briefings/presentations (disseminating information on FFSC’s PFM programs and their benefits), and media coverage of PFM programs and services.
- **Advertising:** Advertising sells a specific product or service by motivating people to actually try the product or service. The key to successful advertising is promotion - repeatedly bringing the product to the attention of customers. The FFSC does not pay to advertise. However, short news items and program announcements are appropriate topics for the base or community newspaper, FFSC newsletter, etc. Fliers, handouts, newsletters, and e-mail/web sites are all marketing materials prepared and used by the FFSC. Advertising is considered a “hard sell”.

5.2 MARKETING RESEARCH

Marketing research is a prerequisite for effective marketing. Marketing research specifies the information required to address the issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes the results, and communicates the findings and their implications (Dictionary of Marketing Terms, 2nd Edition, Peter D. Bennet, Editor, 1995). Marketing research is used to determine customer needs and how well the FFSC is satisfying those needs. (See Section 3.1.2 for information on needs assessments.)

- Marketing research includes primary and secondary research. Primary research data is obtained by observing one’s customers and acquiring their responses to specific questions (surveys, program evaluation, etc.). Secondary research consists of demographic information and past performance data.
- Marketing research information pertaining to PFM programs and services can be collected from the following sources: QOL surveys, focus groups, needs assessments, demographic studies of base/Navy population, and FFSC program evaluations.



5.2.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection and analysis were discussed in Section 3: Program/Services Planning. Data from marketing research will continue to refine needs assessment data. It can help determine whether the target audience has changed, if PFM needs are different, and how program information is obtained.

Focus groups and surveys have a long history in marketing research as well as in needs assessments. For marketing efforts a focus group can specifically:

- Be used to get a better “feel” for the target audience.
- Determine which programs will most likely be “bought” by clients.
- Ascertain how information on FFSC and/or PFM programs and services has been disseminated.

Marketing data can also be gathered by conducting a market survey. Often, surveys are a part of FFSC data collection and analysis. Questions about PFM programs/services including knowledge and use of PFM and methods of obtaining information, should be part of the FFSC survey.

PFM program evaluations are also an excellent source of marketing research data. Program evaluations (See Section 6.1.3) solicit responses as to how participants heard about the program and suggestions for improving the “product”.

5.2.1.1 THE NAVY LEADERSHIP SURVEY 2000

The Navy Leadership Survey was discussed in Section 3.1.2.1.1.1. Findings from this survey are also relevant to marketing PFM programs and services. The following results are based on the responses of leadership at 60 sites. It is critical that each FFSC analyzes the information pertaining to their local area.

The following findings of the 2000 survey are relevant to marketing:

- On a rating of one to five with one being not at all familiar and five being very familiar with FFSC programs, the average rating for PFM services was 3.81 (Third of 15 programs).

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- Contacts with FFSC staff, FFSC brochures or information packets, briefings to commands and base newspapers/media were the most prevalent ways leadership learned about FFSC programs and services.
- Between 20 and 25% of seagoing command leadership had no personal contact with the FFSC.
- The top five reasons leadership did not refer or use the FFSC are:
 1. Not aware of programs and services.
 2. Command was able to help.
 3. Do not think information remained confidential.
 4. Programs did not meet service member's needs.
 5. Had a bad experience at FFSC.
- The top five reasons service members were reluctant to use FFSC programs (based on 1996 Navy FFSC Needs Assessment) are:
 1. Prefer to solve own problems.
 2. Not aware of programs or services.
 3. Do not think information remains confidential.
 4. Programs do not meet needs.
 5. Inconvenient hours.

5.3 MARKETING PLANS

FFSC Accreditation Standard 26020 requires that the FFSC has a marketing plan that covers each program and service provided by the FFSC. The marketing plan must incorporate strategic planning goals and needs assessment data.

The FFSC marketing plan should include the following:

- Target market.
- The message the FFSC wants to convey.



- Media choices (print, radio, TV, briefings).
- Frequency of each marketing activity.
- Ability of FFSC to meet demands.

To carry out the marketing plan, the FFSC staff must understand their role in public relations and how to promote a positive image (FFSC Accreditation Standard 26030).

In planning marketing activities for PFM programs and services consider the four key components, the four “Ps” of marketing:

1. **Product:** PFM programs and services (the product) must satisfy the command/client’s needs based on Navy Instructions and mission requirements. The command and the service member must understand the product (PFM programs and services) offered. To strategically market PFM products, one needs to understand its benefits as perceived by the customer. Are the programs and services meeting the clients’ needs?
2. **Place:** Programs must be available when and where they are wanted. The FFSC should provide a place and time favorable to program attendance. In addition, “place” involves customer service. If the environment is not welcoming, comfortable and conducive to the program or service, the customer may not attend, or not attend future programs.
3. **Promotion:** Promotion is the telling and selling of programs and services. Who is the target of FFSC “advertising”? How are commands, service members and their families finding out about programs? What is the desired outcome? What you say, how you say it, and through what means you say it are key to reaching your desired audience.
4. **Price:** FFSC services are free to commands and service members. But there is a price - i.e. staff time and materials. PFM programs and services must prove they are cost-effective to the Navy. In addition, there are other perceived costs to the customer: the cost of a babysitter, the stress of traffic to get to a program, etc.

5.3.1 SETTING MARKETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Setting goals and objectives is one component of the marketing plan. What goals should the PFM program/services strive to accomplish? How will these be measured?

Marketing goals and objectives:

- Should be realistic and achievable. There must be the time and resources to accomplish the goals.
- Are based on “positioning”. Positioning is defining the programs/services both in terms of the clients and of the competition. PFM programs and services may not have a great deal of competition from organizations offering the same services (especially those familiar with the military). However, PFM is competing with other resources the target audience has identified (i.e. self-help books, internet sites) as well as with what they may prefer to do rather than attending a PFM program.
- Prioritize what is most important. For example, Navy leadership surveys showed a lack of knowledge about PFM programs. Is this a critical factor in marketing? Should this be addressed as a marketing goal? If so, what result is being sought; increased awareness, increased program requests, etc.?

5.4 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing is a planned communication. Marketing communications are verbal, printed or electronic messages sent to inform potential customers about the organization, its products and services, and to convince customers to “buy”. They are the tools used to promote one’s product or service. These include flyers and brochures, Internet web pages, TV and radio, and community networking.

When planning marketing communications:

- Be positive but realistic.
- Develop an action plan. Know what you want to occur before you communicate with the “customer”.
- Appeal to the practical and the emotional perspective of the customer.



- Determine when these communications will occur. General marketing of programs and services is on-going. Advertising a particular program should be done from six to eight weeks in advance. This allows time for the potential participant to schedule and respond. In addition, it allows the FFSC to plan appropriately.

5.4.1 DEVELOPING THE MESSAGE

The marketing message positions the product in the mind of the potential customer. It states the purpose and the benefits of the programs and services. The marketing message should be clear, consistent, and integrated across all modes of FFSC communication. The message is the underlying theme of all marketing efforts; whether stated directly or implicitly. However, the specifics of the message may differ depending to whom you are marketing.

In developing the message consider:

- The concerns, perception or issues that need to be addressed.
- The potential benefits to the target audience.
- What the target audience needs to know to access the program or service.
- What “tone” to take – formal or informal.

5.4.2 MARKETING TOOLS AND TACTICS

Marketing tools are the print and audiovisual materials produced to promote products and services. Marketing tactics are the medium by which one advertises. Both should be cost-effective and easy to implement.

PFM programs and services can be marketed using a variety of tools and tactics. However, remember today’s consumers are assaulted with marketing messages everywhere. To determine the most effective methods to deliver the PFM message, analyze the data from program evaluations, needs assessments and marketing research.

Select tools and tactics that are appropriate for the message and the audience. For example, a great deal of detailed information works better in a brochure than on a flyer, and e-mails are ineffective if the target audience lacks Internet access.

5.4.2.1 PRINT MEDIA

FFSCs use a variety of print media including brochures, flyers, POD announcements and program materials. All printed material with FFSC identifying information on it can be considered a marketing tool.

In addition to FFSC printed materials, the base newspaper, local newspapers, ombudsmen newsletters, etc., can expand printed marketing efforts. Seek coverage of FFSC events and programs. Send press releases and newsworthy articles.

The quality of print and audiovisual products is critical. Whether an FFSC has a trained layout/graphics staff to produce audiovisual and print products or relies on administrative staff or volunteers, there are several key elements in producing quality materials:

- The information must be accurate.
- High-quality graphic design integrates words and images. It should be creative but somewhat conservative.
- The product must be attractive, professional and easy-to-read. It must grab the reader's attention at a glance.
- The look and quality of all materials should be standardized so it is easily identifiable as an FFSC product. Think trademark and/or slogan.
- Rather than using the word "free" which may devalue the program, consider "provided to you at no cost by..." or "services are part of your Navy benefits package..."
- Include a call for action: How is the reader to respond? "Call us" and "Register now" are examples of a call for action.

5.4.2.2 AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA

Audiovisual materials, including radio, TV, and videotapes are generally expensive. Consider the following methods of accessing audiovisual marketing:

- Use public service announcements (PSAs) to advertise programs/services and to seek coverage of FFSC events and programs. Radio and television stations are required to do a specific number of PSAs. Although often shown at odd hours, PSAs on popular stations will reach some members of the targeted audience.



- CCTV (Closed Circuit TV): At many commands, including larger ships, there is a CCTV station. Shows can be produced and broadcast at the command and/or video-taped. A command CFS may work with FFSC staff, or arrange for access to the CCTV station, to produce videos on PFM subjects.
- Computer slide or video presentations: Think about PowerPoint or other computer slide or video programs. They are inexpensive and easy to access.

5.4.2.3 THE INTERNET

The Internet has already proven to be a critical element in publicity and advertising. It is important that online marketing accurately reflect FFSC and PFM programs and services. Consider who will access the information. Service members and their families, commands, CFSs, Ombudsmen and Career Counselors are all probable target audiences for Internet marketing.

If not already in existence, create an FFSC/PFM web site. Approval must be obtained from the FFSC director and local guidance pertaining to web sites and marketing should be followed. Take into consideration the following materials for PFM online content:

- Program mission: A brief description of the Navy's PFM program and the FFSC's role.
- List of programs and services: Include the full range of PFM programs and services.
- Contact information including phone numbers, address, directions, and hours of service.
- Program announcements: What programs and services are currently available? Include registration information. If practical, include a link to registration forms or client information sheets that can be downloaded and sent or brought to the FFSC.
- Volunteer opportunities: Include the types of tasks and hours needed.
- Press releases: Any newsworthy item should be posted on the web site.
- Articles on different aspects of financial management: Include brief articles related to upcoming programs. Pique one's interest and suggest attending the program to learn more.

Be sure the web site is maintained and updated. All FFSC staff should be familiar with the web site and be able to answer basic questions about the content. The information should be

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accurate and timely. If the information never changes, is outdated or inaccurate, it reflects on the credibility of the program and of the FFSC.

E-mail can be used to market in a variety of ways. It is a quick and inexpensive way to reach a large audience. The majority of service members have access to online services and many use it daily. The e-mail message should:

- Identify the FFSC. Include the address, phone numbers and web site.
- Use an informative tone and reflect the FFSC's mission and purpose. Avoid lots of capital letters, scrolling and other characteristics common to Internet advertising. The e-mail should not look like Internet advertising but should be easily identifiable as an FFSC/PFM product.
- Tailor and personalize the e-mail as much as possible. Software is available that allows one to customize e-mails. The receiver can be recognized as an individual and feel that he/she belongs to a community. Information can be targeted that meets the unique needs of a command, interest group, or individual.

Even without the ability to target specific individuals or groups, e-mail can be very effective. It can be used to send flyers and registration materials. If sent as an attachment, the materials can be downloaded, and posted or distributed. For example, a program flyer can be posted at the command, or included in the POD or the ombudsman's newsletter.

E-mail can also be utilized to send recurring communications to a targeted audience. Compile mailing lists of specific groups such as CFSs and ombudsmen. For example, a PFM newsletter or financial resources listings can be sent online to CFSs.

5.5 MARKETING PFM PROGRAMS

When marketing PFM programs and services it is necessary to:

- Work with the installation Public Affairs Officer (PAO).
- Keep an updated mailing list by key target audiences such as commands, financial organizations and guest speakers.
- Know your product: Be an expert not only on PFM programs and services but also on all FFSC programs.



- Build a relationship with key communicators including CFSs, command leadership, NMCRS staff, etc. These people can access others. They have established trust with potential FFSC clients.
- Attend briefings, conferences and events where there is direct, personal contact with potential customers

5.5.1 COMMAND REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

The Command Representative Program is designed to serve the needs of commands by providing a primary point of contact and liaison at the FFSC. A command representative is an FFSC staff member assigned to work specifically with a command. The Command Representative Program is required by FFSC Accreditation Standard 16010.

The purpose of the Command Representative Program is to:

- Provide information to commands on available FFSC educational programs.
- Assist deploying commands in preparing crew and families for deployment.
- Consult with leadership spouses regarding services available to family members.
- Serve as a primary point of contact and referral for services available in the civilian and military communities.

A command representative has the following responsibilities:

- Market FFSC programs to command leadership, including Family Support Group (FSG) president and ombudsmen.
- Schedule and verify all FFSC programs for commands and their FSG.
- Maintain a working file for each assigned command.
- Maintain contact with command including correspondence and mailings.
- Maintain consistent contact with command FSG president and ombudsmen throughout a deployment.

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- The command representative does not present all of the programs for their assigned command. The command representative could be arranging everything from deployment support programs to a GMT on car buying.

5.5.2 MARKETING TO THE COMMAND

Marketing to the command is the most direct way to get PFM programs/services information to leadership. The command representative and the command's CFS must "sell" PFM to the leadership. Both can stress that PFM programs/services help prevent or resolve financial problems that detract from mission readiness. In addition, the command representative can market the FFSC's role in support of the CFS, as well as PFM programs and financial counseling available at the FFSC.

5.5.3 MARKETING TO SERVICE MEMBERS

Although PFM programs are often marketed by the command CFS, there are ways to directly promote the programs to service members. The more familiar the service member becomes with FFSC programs and services the more likely he/she will attend programs and use services as needed. When marketing to service members, appeal not only to the idea of decreasing financial difficulties but also to increasing savings and accumulating wealth.

The following are ways to publicize PFM programs and services directly to the service member:

- Promote PFM programs and services to new personnel at Base Indoctrination.
- Be sure that the availability of PFM programs and services is cited in FFSC program materials.
- Post flyers in high-visibility areas such as officer and enlisted clubs, exchange, etc.
- Use the Internet via the command.
- Publicize in the command's Plan of the Day and/or Plan of the Week. Commands use these to communicate important information to all members of their command.



5.5.4 MARKETING TO FAMILY MEMBERS

Spouses may not be aware of PFM programs or services being offered or may be unsure how or whether to access them. Service members may not communicate the necessary information to their spouses.

To publicize PFM programs and services to family members utilize the following:

- Use Ombudsmen and leadership spouses to communicate. The Ombudsmen or Family Support Group may have a newsletter, telephone tree, and/or web site and be willing to publicize PFM programs and services.
- Have spouses who have attended programs or used PFM services encourage others to attend.
- Advertise in base or housing newspaper via calendar, and news articles.
- Post flyers in high-visibility areas such as child care centers, the commissary or exchange.

5.6 MARKETING CFS COURSE

The FFSC is responsible for conducting/facilitating CFS training either as a designated training site or host to MTT. The command representative should market the course to command leadership including training officers and career counselors. The Commands must be aware of CFS course scheduling and availability. (The schedule is often set up to a year in advance.)

The CFS course can be marketed via the same means as other PFM programs and services. Additionally, it should be marketed through message traffic, base e-mail, leadership meetings and trainings, and in the command's Plan of the Day and Plan of the Week. The course should be advertised at least eight weeks prior to the starting date.

5.7 EVALUATION OF MARKETING EFFORTS

Marketing plans and materials should be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis. Have goals been met? Have program evaluations been positive? In reviewing marketing efforts look once again at the four "Ps" of marketing:

1. Product: Are the current PFM programs and services satisfying the command/client's needs? Has research shown the need for program changes or new program development? Have client demographics changed?

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2. Place: Have programs been available when and where they were wanted?
3. Promotion: Is the FFSC successful in reaching the targeted audience? What techniques and materials have been most effective? Have marketing materials and activities raised awareness and/or increased use of programs?
4. Price: Have PFM programs and services been cost-effective?